

The insides of his conch
indicate his spiritual condition:
pearly pink, with the sound of the waves
built into its spiral.

Where to find him? Consult that tall old
atlas on Dolittle's desk. He's the speck of
an uncharted wandering island, last seen
South of Bora-Bora.

DEMATERIALIZING

We're moving for the fourth time
in a little over a year
and once again I'm talking about
getting rid of everything I own.

Not that I own that much stuff, I don't,
but I kind of like the idea of having
almost no personal effects. I think
just a small box of books, one or two
brown pipes with chewed stems, a tea kettle,
a half a rack of clothes would be ideal.

I've never been much of a consumer,
and now, with everything so very expensive
and me just as poor as ever, I've become
even less of one, buying, other than consumables,
only an occasional book or shirt.

Best would be not to buy anything, except
bread and beer and peanutbutter and such,
or if you did buy something, like a new shirt,
you'd throw out the old one that had become worn.
That way, you'd never have more than an optimum
of ten shirts, say. Or if you had fifty books
and saw a new one you wanted to buy, you'd
have to decide which of your old ones you
wanted to give away or throw in the garbage.
That way, you'd only have books you really
loved, good books you knew you'd read again.

The point of all this, aside from spiritual
benefits and elimination of household clutter,
would be to simplify the moving process. Then,
whenever your wife said the neighborhood
was going to the dogs, or your landlord raised
the rent, or you hated everything about your
life and just had to get out, you could throw
everything into the backseat of the car and
move across town or across the country in one trip.

Of course, this would never work with a family.
There would still be the pots and pans
and sofas that fold out into beds and bookshelves
and ancient, white elephantine appliances
not to mention the 80 or so boxes of Fisher
Price toys and cartons of outgrown infant clothes.
Somehow I don't think my wife and kids have much
enthusiasm for the plan.

THE BOBO

When I first saw The Bobo
I wanted to trim my hair
into a Spanish fringe like Peter Sellers
sling an old guitar over my shoulder
and take Barcelona by storm.

My name in lights, green lights ...
BAUTISTA ... BAUTISTA ... BAUTISTA!
An artiste from the provinces
a crafty gypsy and a lady killer too
the Latin madness coursed through my veins.

For you, sweet lady, I had plans
a phony check for 50,000 pesetas
drawn on an equally fake Duke's account
the furriers distrusted me and also your maid
thought me a rogue and a bandit.

But you alone saw the purity of my vision
splayed feline on the sleek bonnet
of that other gentleman's Ferrari, you had
an ear for the seductive note, your
lips knew the kiss of life.

Call it poor vanity, a too rich
imagination gone wild. The city fountains
bubble for me. Old Castilian dust, golden
in the sun. The roar of the crowd, dazzling
I step from the ring, triumphant.

PETOMAINÉ

Farting is the art of the poor. It
clears the mind, tunes the bowels,
gives good physic for the soul.